

60 MINUTES
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BRADLEY: Since the end of the second World War, about a thousand defectors from the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries have come over to our side with valuable information, but then became non-persons. Now some former Central Intelligence Agency officials are saying we'd better start changing our attitude toward them or lose one of our most important sources of intelligence. One of those sources was this man, Vladimir Sakharov, no relation to dissident Soviet physicist Andrei Sakharov. Vladimir Sakharov says he may have come in from the cold, but instead of a warm welcome, what he got from the CIA was a cold shoulder. If you had to describe your treatment overall by the CIA, what would you say? VLADIMIR SAKHAROV: Inefficient, unprofessional, rotten, humiliating, degrading.

BRADLEY: The sometimes shabby treatment of defectors in the CIA's resettlement program bothers Mark Wyatt. Wyatt is a former senior liaison officer between U.S. intelligence and foreign intelligence services. And why is Wyatt upset? MARK WYATT: I would say Ed that this is one of our primary sources of high level, intentional level, intelligence. Cracking the Kremlin, for a free country like the United States, is not easy. I cannot tell you whether we have an agent inside the Kremlin or not. I hope so. But it would be a pretty rare case. Because that is about the toughest nut to crack. Whereas, in the United States, the Soviets can operate pretty much with impunity. And as a result, the defector channel is terribly important to us. I don't believe that you could put a price tag on the value of intelligence that we've received from defectors into the billions of dollars. It is, in short, invaluable to us. A good example of how valuable a defector can be is the case of the 47 Soviet diplomat who were expelled from France last spring. Intelligence experts say those expulsions from Paris, as well as similar ones from London and Rome, were made possible by the defection of Vladimir *Kusitchgen, a veteran Soviet agent who knew the system well enough to point the finger at Soviet spies in many parts of the world. Kusitchgen is one of many Soviet defectors who abandoned their families, their professions, and their countries to come in from the cold. The people fingered by Kusitchgen held diplomatic posts which they used as a cover to spy on France's most important military and industrial technology. There's no official price tag on the information they were able to gather, but the damage was heavy. The material they stole included information on advance French aircraft carriers and the neutron bomb. Like those people expelled from Paris, Sakharov was also a Soviet diplomat. He says he wanted to earn the right to come to the United States. And about 10 years ago, the CIA gave him the chance. Before defecting, he became a double agent in the Middle East. He brought to the job his knowledge of Arabic and his experience as a KGB operative in Nasser's Egypt while it was under Soviet influence. Experts like Mark Wyatt say he passed on to our side first-hand information about Soviet plans to foment trouble in the Middle East and to disrupt the flow of oil to the West. When the things got too hot, as they say, he came over the mountain, ending his role as a double agent. He was debriefed in this safe house in Virginia. Sakharov expected work that would utilize his training and experience. That is not what he got. What did they do to help you settle in the United States? SAKHAROV: Well, initially, I was, they bought me one-way ticket to Hollywood. And they gave me new identity.